(SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) The estimated number of BPL families is 6.52 crores and the estimated number of AP families is 11.50 crores as on 1.3.2000 in the country for whom allocation of foodgrains is made under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The statistics relating to the percentage of people purchasing grains from the Fair Price Shop is not maintained in the Ministry.

(b) and (c) Keeping in view the low offtake of foodgrains in respect of APL families, the Government has decided to allocate foodgrains to the APL families at the discounted rate of 70% of the economic cost w.e.f 12.7.2001 and upto 31.3.2002.

Poor Performance of PDS

1220. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for a poor offtake under PDS; and

(b) the action taken to improve quick delivery system, proper monitoring and ensure effective distribution of the mountain of foodgrains lying with Government to feed the under nourished and hungry "janata"?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Offtake of foodgrains from the Public Distribution System (PDS) is dependent on the difference between the open market prices and the PDS and retail prices, availability of foograins in the open market, purchasing power of the PDS consumers especially people belonging to the BPL category and food habits of the consumers. Under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) the Central Issue Prices of foodgrains meant for distribution to the families living below poverty line have been kept at levels which are lower than the market prices to ensure higher offtake. The offtake for BPL families has been about 80% of the allotment during 1999-2000. The offtake of foodgrains under BPL category has been about 66.3% of the allotments during 2000-2001.

The allotment for BPL families was increased from 10 kg. to 20 kg. of foodgrains per family per month at 50% of economic cost from 1.4.2000. Since then the offtake for the year 2000-2001 was 5874.682 tonnes in rice and 3645.828 tonnes in wheat as compared 3976.380 tonnes in rice and 3018.309 tonnes in wheat during 1999-2000 under BPL category. Although the increase in offtake during 2000-2001 has not been proportionate to the doubling of allocation made during the year there has been an overall increase in offtake under this category during 2000-2001 as compared to 1999-2000. Hence the offtake under the BPL category should not be regarded as poor.

The offtake of foodgrains under the APL category is reduced after the increase in Central Issue Price (CIP) w.e.f. 1.4.2000 and withdrawal of subsidy.

(b) Keeping in view the low offtake of foodgrains in respect of APL families, the Government has decided to allot foodgrains for APL families at the discounted rate of 70% of the economic cost and increase the allotment for BPL families from 20 kg. to 25 kg. per family per month w.e.f. 12.7.2001.

In order to efficiently reach the essential commodities under Public Distribution System to the consumers in a transparent and accountable manner a Model Citizens' Charter for Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has also been drawn up and circulated to States/UTs for adoption. Based on the belief that truly democratic institutions do better safeguard food security concerns of all than the State bureaucracy, the Government has also advised the State Governments to more substantially involve the Gram Panchayats in supervision and monitoring of PDS especially at FPS level as a measure of social audit.

With a view to protect the interest of the producers and consumers, Consultative Committee at Zonal and State/Union Territory levels have been formed in the Food Corporation of India (FCI) which serve as an interface between the FCI and the PDS in the States. The Committees discuss and make recommendations on procurement, distribution and transportation of foodgrains, sale, disposal of foodgrains and implementation of 'Antyodaya Anna Yojana'.